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E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SUBJECT: HAITI "WOMAN OF COURAGE" NOMINATION

REF: SECSTATE 12871

¶1. (U) Per reftel, Post nominates Dr. Marie Gessy Coicou, Inspector General of the Haitian National Police, for the Secretary of State's Award for International Women of

SIPDIS  
Courage.

¶2. (U) Biographical information and justification for award selection:

Name: Dr. Marie Gessy Coicou  
Title: Inspector General in Chief  
Institution: Haitian National Police  
Date of birth: 8 December 1954  
Contact information: Tel: 011-509-222-6834; Cell:  
011-509-558-6998; Email: gescacoicou@hotmail.com

Justification: Marie Gessy Coicou was recruited by National Police Academy in 1997 as part of an effort to bring more high and mid level managers into the Haitian National Police (HNP). A medical doctor by training, Gessy placed first in the recruiting exam and also graduated at the top of her class at the Academy. She was especially noted by her instructors for her great sense of responsibility as well as academic and intellectual excellence.

Very early in her career at the HNP, Dr. Coicou was noticed by the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), which was trying to stand up a forensic department in the HNP. Gessy worked relentlessly to establish the "Bureau de la Police Scientifique et Technique" (BPST) with little or no help from her superiors. At one point while her unit was investigating the family member of a powerful Inspector General in Chief of the HNP, she was reminded by the official that, as a woman, she should stay in her place. A period of harassment ensued and her family advised her to resign the HNP. Gessy refused, stating that if competent people give up, no one will be left to lead when the right time comes.

After the resignation of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Gessy rose to several key positions including spokesperson of the HNP and Assistant Central Director for the judicial police. In 2005, Gessy was appointed Inspector General in Chief of the HNP. Gessy's strong stand against armed gangs and drug traffickers in Haiti made her very unpopular in some government circles. She found herself working alone while serious threats were made against herself and her family.

Today Gessy is working to re-establish the BPST and has been tasked by the HNP Director General to help with the HNP's reform plan. She and her husband Dr. Robert Coicou still find time to run a small hospital and a clinic. They also head a foundation that provides food and training programs to young people in Port-au-Prince and Carrefour.

13. (U) Post's POC for women's issues is Political Officer Lynette M. Behnke; telephone: 011-509-222-0200, ext. 8119; email: behnkel@state.gov.  
SANDERSON